



John Vincent Grealish

December 6, 1955 - May 11, 2020

John Vincent Grealish of Lakeland passed away at home surrounded by loving family on May 11, 2020 after a short battle with anaplastic astrocytoma of the brain. This was not John's first experience with brain cancer; he defeated a medulloblastoma tumor in 1983. He leaves behind his wife Renee' and countless special family members and friends.

John was born in Yonkers, NY to Deirdre June Barker and Jack F. Grealish on December 6, 1955. As a young child, his father took him to jazz clubs like Village Vanguard and Half Note, where John sat sipping nonalcoholic beverages and initially thinking this jazz stuff sounded like a bunch of noise. But eventually, John developed not only an appreciation and love for jazz but seeing jazz greats like Bobby Hutchison and Elvin Jones created an itch that needed to be scratched. He wanted to be on that stage! Determined to pursue his dream, he played his first paid gig at the age of 13 at a resort in the Catskill Mountains. He performed with his first set of professional drums, a gift from his grandmother and previously owned by jazz drummer Cozy Cole. While living in New York, John held many positions in show business. He was a lighting and special effects tech, a sound tech, a production assistant, and head of merchandising for many singers, entertainers, and both Broadway and national touring companies, working on shows like "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "The Rock Opera Tommy." All the while watching and learning from great musicians and dreaming of being onstage performing himself. Then, at the age of eighteen, John joined the Navy and proudly served on the

USS Nathan Hale as an electrician from 1974 to 1975.

One day in March 1978, John asked his friend Irwin Wolfe what he was doing next Wednesday and told him to get packed because they were moving to Florida! He and Irwin made their way to Florida in John's maroon station wagon to pursue their dream as full-time musicians. John and Irwin, along with Bruce Shay and John's very best friend Frank Goldbach, formed the band Powerhouse, which became one of the most popular bands in south and central Florida for about a decade.

Over the years, John continued to play various gigs with other talented musicians. John and Frank played with Bobby Haselier in 3 different bands including The Brothers from Different Mothers, and John played with Skip and Nancy Frye and Bruce Shay in a band called Pizzazz, later renamed Laramie. Just to name a few.

While playing a Lakeland show at Buggy Seagal's in 1989, the handsome drummer John Vincent was mingling in the crowd when he met Renee' Raulerson. She was not out that night to meet a man, but to simply have a good time with her friend Theresa. However, Renee' was taken by John's genuinely nice personality and kind disposition. He asked her out, and they had their first date at Chili's on South Florida Ave. After that date, John and Renee' were never apart again. They married in 1992 and enjoyed 28 years of love, fun times, and laughter.

John worked for the US Postal Service in Winter Haven as a letter carrier for 22 years. This career allowed him to once again proudly serve his country. Driven further by his desire to serve, John created the nonprofit God Empowered Ministries, which enabled him to feed the homeless in his community for several years.

After his retirement from USPS, John began working hard on a dream to have his own recording studio. He started with a shell of a building and constructed an ambient space for musicians to comfortably set up equipment and jam together. He spent much of his time tweaking and troubleshooting multiple technical obstacles but always persisted with his vision. During this time, he

also used the studio to begin teaching his niece Christina to play the drums, a passion they both shared. Sadly, John was never able to record any songs in the studio due to his abrupt illness. His niece Christina has promised to do her best to carry out his dream to jam, make music and record.

John had a genuinely kind, loving personality, and he spread joy everywhere he went, to everyone he met. He had a smile and a laugh that touched every soul in a room, and the ability to break out in song to fit any conversation.

John had a positive and monumental impact on the lives of so many. He was friendly to everyone and judged no one. Countless have called him the nicest guy they've ever met. To say he will be missed is a severe understatement.

His absence will leave a daily void in the lives of many, but his legacy of love, kindness and passion for music will continue to live through all who hold a special place in their heart for John Grealish.

A special celebration of life including John's favorite things, live music, food and the people he loved will be held at a later date.

Tribute Wall

JS

“ Farewell Old Friend, fond memories of our teenage years growing up ! Thank You for keeping in touch all these years. Prayers to Renee and Families. God Speed John !!



James Stas - May 15, 2020 at 01:59 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of John Vincent Grealish.



May 14, 2020 at 11:15 AM

BR

“ Dear Renée, I am so very sorry for your loss. Reading about John's big life was amazing, he truly touched thousands of people with his music and kindness. RJ and I enjoyed the times we got to visit with y'all. I will keep you, Sheree', Marc, and the girls in my thoughts and prayers. I love you my friend, Barbara Reynolds

Barbara Reynolds - May 13, 2020 at 10:26 PM



“ *My dear brother John, as you were loving known in my family. Remembering the good times on Elliot Avenue in Queens. Kids being kids. Big Brothers, Frankie & John picking on the 3 little sisters. You did Woodstock, concerts, scary movies, and the best darn water fights this side of the universe. You gave it a good fight and now you are with your Brother, Frankie, building your heavenly band in the sky. Say hi to our Dad's too. You are loved and will be missed always. Love your little sister, Linda Goldbach & my family.*



May 13, 2020 at 02:56 PM

RR

Dear Renee, I am so sorry to hear today of John's passing. Tony called me today. I spoke to him a few weeks ago but still did not realise he was to leave us so soon. He was always such a kind and gentle soul. Never a bad word about anyone. He was such a sweet little boy, loved so much by his dad and mom. I will always remember him and treasure that memory of him. May he Rest In Peace and be held lovingly in God's hand. Love, His cousin Rita Ryan

Rita Ryan - May 14, 2020 at 12:42 AM

DJ

Dear Renee,

I must add our condolences to those who knew John well, and have left more knowing comments. Our Sympathies are extended to you and yours in this time of remembrance and for time to come.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Raulerson Jr., Judy Raulerson, and Amanda Ruiz

Donald E. Raulerson Jr. - May 16, 2020 at 04:49 PM